

Gleams
of
Truth
by
Mrs. Julia Aldrich Baker



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MRS. JULIA ALDRICH BAKER.

Gleams of Truth

FAMILY EDITION



Mrs. Julia Aldrich Baker

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TO
MY SONS
THOMAS NELSON
CHARLES MITCHELL AND HASTINGS WYMAN
BAKER
THESE POEMS ARE LOVINGLY DEDICATED
BY THEIR
MOTHER

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Introduction

The generation following the war in this State must have had men and women who, in varying degrees, were inclined to poetic moods. They seem to have been unfaithful to their calling. Very few volumes of poetry have been published in our State since the great war. The time for war lyrics was over, and the time for songs of peace was slow in coming. The people had to adjust themselves to new conditions. The prosaic, clamorous demands for food, raiment, and shelter were urgent. Public affairs and private interests filled up the time and thoughts of all. Ideals, dreams, and visions were not welcome, perhaps were shunned as disloyal to the sacred past.

We accept this modest volume as a good omen at this time. A few memories of the war are here, but most of these verses may be classed as household poems. They are not morbid, exciting, or startling. The healthiest, purest affections that enrich common life are here expressed in tuneful numbers. The gifted writer grew up in a happy home, though it had, of course, its intervals of sorrow. As girl, woman, wife, mother, friend, she took in, and gave out, the sympathies and feelings that flow around an affectionate family group and a cherished circle of friends. There is nothing in these pages to unfit the reader of any age for quiet days and common duties. Reverence, charity, and hope are the prevailing tone and spirit of the volume which we now hand over to the intelligent, sympathizing reader.

JAMES H. CARLISLE.

Spartanburg, S. C., March, 1904.

Preface

So many poets lived and wrote
 Immortal verse before our time,
On all things true and beautiful,
 Naught new remains for my poor rhyme,
Save scattered fragments here and there.

 Yet since nature still is true,
Content I'll be if my faint song
 Wakens a response in you;
Or if perchance some little spark
 Of hope or comfort I may fan,
Or help some weary-hearted one
 A happier hour to span,
Right gladly I the off'ring give,
 While my heart-springs overflow,
This modest bouquet of such flow'rs
 As in my inner garden grow.

IMAGINATION.

Liberty as on wings to rise,
E'en to the summit of the skies.
Liberty, though not much used,
To sink to depths darkly abused.

To quaff free draughts of fantasy ;
To shake the fettered senses free.
On reason's stern law trespassing,
In licensed freedom reveling.

It is a joy the heart confesses,
Casting off all that compresses,
In the short recess of logic's school,
To break loose from the iron rule.

Lending to nature our own voices,
It weeps with mankind, and rejoices.
A friend to him, in sympathy,
When cold has grown humanity.

“The talking oak,” the whispering winds,
The babbling brook, the sighing pines,
The smiling sun, the weeping clouds ;
Thus nature's heart our own enshrouds.

In soothing rest, or giddy flight,
Viewing life's freshness or its blight.
As childhood sings, or laughs, or weeps,
In restless chase, or quiet sleeps.

Seeking the wild woods and the daisies,
Unmindful of life's noisy phases,
When spring's bright colors mark Earth's map,
To nestle close in nature's lap !

The weary man may rest his brain,
The suff'ring heart relax its pain.
The mother, tho' uncomf'ered,
In dreams may find her child, tho' dead.

Oh, region blest of higher thought !
Where visions wonderful are wrought.
The hidden world, the inward life,
Safe sheltered from the outward strife.

The soul can weep, and fear no scorn,
Within its home should sin be born.
With no strange voice to taunt and fret,
Can bury it, and e'en forget.

Can sing its triumph song of joy,
When freed from all impure alloy.
Can dip itself in Lethe's stream,
And only see the beck'ning gleam.

'Tis there where fairy forms abound,
'Tis there that perfect joy is found ;
Hope fully blest, and only there,
Throughout Earth's treach'rous atmosphere.

The hungry heart may there be fed;
The restless longings find a bed;
Sweet be the dreams, and innocent,
Blest with a deep tho' brief content.

Music's most entrancing number
Hov'ring o'er the semi-slumber,
Picture of death—the lullaby,
Whisperings of eternity.



DOUBT.

Has friendship failed? Has love forgot?
In pity let me know it not.
Too hard the stroke my heart to bear,
It needs must yield to dark despair.

Yet, what is worse than cruel doubt,
Which clings like poison vines about?
Dispersing joys, like shattered flowers;
Filling the life with torturous hours.

Better to know the very truth,
Whether it dooms or blesses youth.
For dangers seen, one may prepare;
The hidden danger, who can dare?

THE PACOLET FLOOD.

(Caused by a cloudburst June 6, 1903.)

Black rolled the clouds through the darkness,
Shrouding the valley in gloom;
Thundered the voice of the storm-king,
Sounding the valley's quick doom.

Bursting, the clouds poured in torrents,
While the storm-king held his breath,
Changing the calm-flowing river
To a raging current of death.

Rushing, and winding, and foaming,
Hurrying on its dread way,
Breaking its bounds in its fury,
As hungry for human prey!

While, lo! on their peaceful pillows,
Calmly the doomed victims slept,
Till sudden the frenzied river
Them into its bosom swept.

In its deep folds closely held them,
Rocked with its dread cradle song;
Bathed with its waters their faces,
And kissed them to silence long.

Hushed was the voice of the mother,
Drifted the babe from her arms.
Pity was far from those waters;
Youth was not spared for its charms.

Dreams of sweet home life and blessings,
 Echoes of love's plighted vow,
Drowned in those depths with the maiden,
 Cold on the lover's lips now.

Tossed was old age like the white foam,
 Its hoary head forced unto death,
While ruin rose up like a spectre
 Born of the storm-king's breath.

Spent was the wrath of the waters,
 The storm in its fury gone;
Out of the chaos came calmness,
 Out of the darkness, the morn.

Oh, but the heartache and longings!
 Oh, but the tears Sorrow shed!
Gazing on dear pallid faces,
 Kissing cold lips of the dead.

HUMAN NATURE.

Pro et Con.

The pessimist cries out: "Honor is dead!
And virtue is easily bought.

Truth has a meaning occasion may shift,
And honesty means almost naught.

Money, not knowledge, is power today,
Ev'rything yields to its firm grasp;
Oft character's fairest promise it blights,
Death only unfastens its clasp."

Reluctant I hear, and turning away,
Scan the men and women I meet.
Can it be true, as the pessimist says,
Humanity's fall so complete?

No! for today in my sight stands a man,
No faint doubts embarrass my view;
I know him, have proved him, as gold is proved;
Life I would stake on his honor true.

And others there be, tho' weary to look
Such distance between; but such rest
Comes to the heart when these virtues *are* found,
Still pure in humanity's breast.

'Twere well worth the search, like balm on a wound,
Like drink to a thirsty one given;
I clasp to my heart and cherish such truths,
As links in the bright chain to heaven.

And women I see mid the passing throng,
Fair and pure as the pearls they wear.
Tho' the whiteness of some is dimmed by sin,
I shut from my sight their despair,
And only gaze on that long, fair band, which
Purity crowns like a diadem,
And rejoice to think that God's pure eyes
Can look thus far and smile on them.



WILL YOU?

Beneath your window, out in the snow,
A little bird waits, too sad to sing.
Hungry and helpless, looks up to you,
Will you help it on towards the Spring?

Another life, nearer to your own,
Languishes too, and cannot now sing.
Too chilling the air, too starved the heart,
Will you help it back towards love's Spring?

LIFE'S ENTIRETY.

When thought has budded into bloom,
When mental eyes survey life's scene,
Noting the heights which rise afar,
Noting the depths lying between,
And all the lines which meet and cross,
Then seizes man one long desire,
Despite the odds which 'gainst him lie,
Somehow to make his life entire.

Feeling his strength and higher pow'rs,
The flood-gates of his being ope.
Filled with the longings which inspire,
He girds himself with foes to cope.
He bends his will, and moulds his plans,
And follows one unswerving trend;
Hoping, tho' failing; struggling yet
Towards that one desired end.

As wheel in wheel revolving turns,
The days within the years roll round.
Laden with man's plans, small and great,
Merging and mixed, with no sure bound.
While ever that same longing lures,
And half deceives him to believe
Some day, somehow, fulfilled will be
The measure his fond hopes conceive.

And as the seasons come and go,
Some fruits mature, tho' many fall.
'Tis well he is thus far refreshed,
But he can never gather all,
Nor claim the harvest is complete.
The fruits of Earth—the hopes of man—
He never will, in mortal guise,
See crowned in one his every plan.

No shadow falls without a cause.
Nature implants not seed for naught.
Wherefore this longing then in man?
This aim, which nature herself taught?
Has it no meaning, save as chance
At random hits the mark or fails?
Or as the ship upon the seas,
As breezes blow, stands still, or sails?

Yea, as the truth lives evermore,
There is a meaning, fixed, and plain;
But man must rise to higher heights
If higher objects he would gain.
Then may his longings be fulfilled,
Failures forgot in triumph sweet.
Above Earth's bounds he may behold
His life work perfect, and complete.

THE SIGNAL FLAGS.

There's a beauty in the autumn woods
Which elsewhere is not seen;
The gold and red in rich accord,
Adorn the curtain green.
And all hang like bright signal flags,
Uplifting heart and eye,
While breezes whisper thro' the leaves:
"The year is passing by."

E'en so in life's rich mellow time,
So full of goodly stores,
The autumn of her summer prime,
Which nature's course bestows,
Who clearly looks can read the signs,
Time's promise never lags;
And happy he who sees in time,
And *heeds* the signal flags.

THE STEEPLE'S FALL.

In a village stood a Gothic church with its tall spire. Owing to some architectural defect, in after years the steeple was deemed unsafe, and was pulled down by means of ropes attached to it far up, and drawn by power applied below. These lines are based upon this incident.

The steeple of the village church
Thro' many years had stood.
A firmly rooted thing it seemed,
Standing for what was good.

Yet now condemned, it needs must fall,
Tho' hard the strain and forced;
While creaking timbers stood the test,
As loath to leave their post.

Musing, I watched the struggle strange,
And seemed to feel the pain;
As after each fresh effort spent,
I saw it still remain.

Tho' more and more it trembled,
Careening in its height,
Seemed almost like a living thing
Contending for a right.

And ever 'mid the conflict
And total wreck at hand,
It pointed up and to the last
Fulfilled its mission grand.

I could have wept, as stronger grew
The now unequal strife;
The noble spire struggling still
To save its struct'ral life.

Just then I heard the bell ring out
In trembling, fitful tone,
(As it was shaken in the strife)
As if it too would mourn.

Oft had it rung in merry tone
On happy wedding days;
Oft tolled its saddest requiem;
Called man to give God praise.

But new and strange its tone that day,
And pitiful to me.
Half like a protest, half it seemed
A farewell dirge to be.

The time had come at last, ah, me!
The creaking, crashing sound!
I hid my eyes as, shattering,
It fell upon the ground.

Slowly and sad I turned away,
With thoughts I could not speak.
The glory seemed gone from the day,
And tears were on my cheek.

BROTHER LOVE.

“Come, little sister, with me today,
Where wild flowers bloom so fair.”

“Brother, if you will but hold my hand,
I’ll go with you anywhere.”

“Come, my sister, with me thus, today,
Wearing your fair bridal veil;
To a new, strange love I give you away,
At the sacred altar rail.

I come back, sister, to you today,
After a few fleeting years,
For I hear the church bell’s solemn toll,
For your smiles I see sad tears.

For your long, white bridal veil I see
The widow’s most sombre weeds;
But a brother true, is truer still,
When he sees his sister’s needs.

Your hand again I thus take today,
As in the glad olden time.
While life shall last I will be your stay,
Nor fail you, dear sister mine.”

“Oh, brother! Our God can give and take
His blessings at His own will,
But on bended knees I thank Him now
That I have my brother still!”

CARACTACUS.

(A noble chief of ancient Britain.)

Nestled in her same blue shining waters,
Long ago Britannia proudly lay,
With her strong, brave sons and fairest daughters,
Her tall, white cliffs, her streams, her verdure gay.
Circled round, this fair land was protected
Throughout long years, from Europe's hordes so
fierce,
Ev'rywhere was freedom's light reflected,
As the sun's rays darkest forests pierce.

Julius Cæsar, led by his ambition
And lust of conquest, struck at last a blow ;
But the isle rose from this new condition
More fair and wise, and stronger, than before.
Oh, ocean gem, in thy rough beauty,
Shine on ! Oh, Britain, drink thy mountain air !
Soon sterner work will be thy duty ;
The mighty Roman foe again draws near !

Claudius and his skillful generals fought
The sons of Britain ; fought thro' streams of
blood ;
Some for conquest, some for home, and so wrought
Valiant deeds, stroke for stroke, till like a flood
The foe poured on the highlanders so fast
All hope seemed gone for Freedom's victory ;
And so some chiefs reluctantly, at last,
Than death, chose slavery's deep humility.

Not so the noble chief Caractacus;
Dauntless he fights, and will not yield nor die!
Holding his treach'rous ground, with flashing eyes
He lifts aloft his stirring battle cry:
"Fight to the death, my braves! for Britain's fate
Hangs on your swords this day, this very hour!
Liberty trembles in your valiant grasp!
Eternal slav'ry marks the victor's power!"

The conflict raged, the crimson blood flowed fact.
The Roman host, overwhelming, rushed,
Till Valor needs must fall in fruitless death,
Or fly perforce, overpowered, not crushed.
So fled the band of brave Caractacus,
For refuge, in that sorest hour of need,
To one, a queen—his father's second wife,
Who wrought, tho' woman she, the basest deed!

O Treachery! Black and hideous crime!
Weak be the arm, silenced the coward tongue
Which works thy will! Alas! that woman's hands
Could ever do the heartless deed now sung!
And his father's wife! but not his mother,—
For motherhood could never fall so low,
Nature's deepest fount never prove so dry,
To betray a son to his mortal foe!

Caractacus! That proudest, bravest chief!

Whose sinewy arm, never conquered, fell
In fight, like Sisera, a prey to trust,

The irons on his wrists the sequel tell!
And he is captive! but not his proud soul!

This picture dark, this tale, does hist'ry tell.
Oh, woman! broad is thy complex nature,—
Reaching from near heaven almost to hell!

All round those Roman chiefs supplicants knelt,
Begging for life, and liberty of limb.

Caractacus alone, of all that band,
Asked naught, not even dear life, for him.

He saw his wife led captive to his side,
Silent, while tears stole slowly down her cheek.
But harder still to bear, hardest of all,

He saw and heard his little son thus speak:

“My father, shall I strike for liberty?”

And high he raised his little bare white arm,
And flashed his eye, while those stern men gave way,

Held back one moment by the magic charm.
Kind breezes fanned the boy's hot cheek and brow,

And played in the flaxen curls, but no sound
Greeted his ear—the father's lips were dumb—

They moved, but not a single word was found.

How could he speak? How crush his child's brave heart?

The mother could but weep, and pass her arm Caressing round her brave, unconquered son.

'Twere better that the storm break such a calm! Captives and captors in long marcing line,

Leave Britain's hills and conquered shoes behind, Till Rome's strange streets, and mocking throngs behold

The iron chains which those brave captives bind.

But one, their leader still, Caractacus,

Even in chains walked proudly, like a king, Caught the eye of all, and admiration,

While Rome's rich splendors kept him wondering : "Can it be possible that men who live

In marble palaces thus grand, in Rome, With gilded domes, and columns tall and fair, Could envy me my humble cottage home?"

The emperor Claudius heard and saw—

Deep touched were the finest chords of his heart ; Beholding the man, his wife, and the boy,

Something like tears to his stern eyes did start, And he cried out loudly : "Caractacus !

Tho' captive thou, and I the chief in Rome, So grand in thy ruin art thou to my sight, Thy shackles I break ! Go back to thy home !"

THE FOG HORN.

The dreariest of dreary sounds
Which o'er the harbor bar resounds,
Floating on murky atmosphere,
Borne in upon the pensive ear,
It is, when mists enshroud the morn,
To hear the warning, deep fog horn.

Another of life's dreary sounds
O'er the heart's billows oft resounds ;
Wafted on moral atmosphere,
Borne in upon the tempted ear ;
It is when sinful thoughts are born
And virtue sounds her clear fog horn.

Tho' dreary sounds these be to hear,
They save from death and black despair.
That sailor must be lost to reason,
Or is guilty of high treason,
Near treach'rous rocks on murky morn,
Who fails to heed the deep fog horn.

So must that soul in naked guilt,
Charged with the soul-life it hath spilt,
Whether 'twas suicidal stroke,
Or others hopes of heav'n it broke,
It must forever rue the morn
It heeded not the soul's fog horn.

In both these cases, sad to see,
Women and children wrecked may be.
Tho' white and guiltless, they may sink,
Should Fate place them on treach'rous brink;
They die, because on some sad morn,
Unheeded was the deep fog horn.



VOICES.

Some voices high on the mountain tops
Pour out all their heart's ecstasies;
Some voices down in the valley's depths
Sing ever their sweet harmonies.

Both voices are true, and fulfil their end,
The high end for which they were born,
If faithful to trust, some listn'ing souls
They lead thro' the dark, to the morn.

IF WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.

(Written at about the age of 14 years. Revised later.)

How many tears would cease to flow
From the eyes of sister or brother,
How many sighs would ne'er be breathed,
If we understood each other!

For oft we'd check some unkind word,
Whether to foe or to lover,
And use instead our gentlest tones,
If we understood each other.

But oft the heart most sorely bruised
We touch with unloving fingers.
And oft the heart with love infused,
We chill, till no love lingers.

Tears which seem weakness, yet may flow
From hidden founts of suffering.
And the deed we light consider,
May be love's best offering.

Oh, then take thought! nor heedlessly
Wounds of friend or foe uncover;
Heart wounds, which we would bind and soothe,
If we understood each other.

A REVERIE.

Faults I have, and who has not?

Yet God, who sees the inmost heart,
And judges, not as mortals judge,
Who sees the whole, and not a part,

He knoweth that my heart is true,
And that my sins, whatever they be,
Are done without the ill intent;
Done thoughtlessly, not wilfully.

And 'twas unkind in one, and false,
To me these ruthless words to say:
"You never meant, you never tried,
To find God's steep and narrow way."

Did I not try? And if I failed,
And asked God to forgive my sin,
Did he shut out my prayer, and judge
As if my sin had wilful been?

Oh, no! but rather did he see
That while my dreamy eyes were turned
In wonder on a beauteous star
Towards which my youthful heart yearned,

The devil with a wily hand,
Fresh from the darksome shades of hell,
Before me cast a stumbling block,
Unheeding which, I hapless fell.

Yet now, methinks a danger lurks,
And I must deal true with my soul.
God will hold me to strict account
For all things under my control.



MY LADY LOVE.

Your natural charms and graces
A joy to all impart.
And wake the admiration
And homage of each heart.

The instincts of your nature
Caught color from above,
Creating all around you
An atmosphere of love.

MAKING FACES.

My Cousin Bob, in mirthful mood,
Would gather us the table round,
And say, "A prize I'll give the one
On whom the ugliest face is found.

One at a time—now let's begin,
And try our best to look our worst—
The girl who makes me laugh the most,
Besides the prize, I'll kiss her first."

With such incentives, hard we tried
To prove who best his measure filled,
While he set us example bad,
And many ugly points instilled.

At last a great explosion came—
He laughed till tears rolled down his cheek.
"Hold up a minute now," he cried,
"For I have laughed till I am weak.

Now go ahead. Oh, that is fine!
Great Jupiter! Look what a phiz!
But can't you beat it next in line?"
Was his insatiable quiz.

The storm of laughter rose and fell,
Until his good old mother came
To find out what was "up" in there—
Then he willingly took the blame.

He laughed and laughed, then cried aloud,
 "Oh, for an artist, brush and paints!
 For some look like the devil now,
 And some look like his chiefest saints!"



LITTLE ED'S EXPERIENCE.

Mercy! Can I get under here?
 Ma's giving me an awful scare!
 But, thank my stars, by crawling so,
 Tho' 'this old house is built so low,
 I think my biggest danger's past,
 For I'm safe under here at last!

Can't answer, ma; I'm deaf this time.
 To come out now would be a crime.
 Glad the house *is* low, and I'm small,
 And ma is stout, if she ain't tall.
 If I should die under here now,
 She'd raise another kind of row!

Just listen now! Oh, ma, for shame!
 I hate my ugly sounding name.
 There's something coming! Why, it's pa!
 Run out the house, I bet, by ma.
 Crawl under, pa; here's room for you—
 Poor pa! Is she after you too?

LIFE'S TANGLED THREADS.

Weaving the wonderful fabric of life
From mixed and scattered shreds,
How often the task is hindered and hurt
Because of tangled threads.
Sometimes 'tis the fault of others, thus
Tangling our threads of life,
By intent or chance, as fate may decree,
In this peculiar strife.

But 'tis often the work of our own hands;
Thriftless, careless, unwise;
We see not the right thread to choose, because
We look not thro' true eyes.
Or perchance if we rightly choose, we pause,
Turn aside, let it drop;
And never again thro' all the long years
The empty space can stop.

We may not much feel the difference great,
While spring and summer last.
But each missing thread, like a cruel gap,
Will let in winter's blast.
Then we can but shudder and feel regret
For our neglected trust.
And others must suffer for us, as we
For others suffer must.

So the loom of each life goes weaving on,
 Now heavily, now light.
We each have to wear the fabric we weave,
 On stormy days or bright.
And happy he who in patience gathers
 The mixed and scattered shreds,
And weaves sound fabric, by choosing the best
 From among life's tangled threads.



FRIENDSHIP.

Playmate of my childhood,
 Companion of my youth,
Your kindness, love, and tenderness,
 Rich treasures prove, in truth.

Not sparkling wit can cheer
 Like glances from your eye;
It soothes my restlessness of heart
 To know that you are nigh.

A SIMILE.

Tired of the task assigned,
Of the weary, common round,
Impatiently, with reckless hand
 He cast his burden down.
Never counting all the cost,
Little deeming all it meant,
Not a sigh for the treasure lost,
 On his blind way he went.
And only saw when too late
What he had thus thrown away,
For God gives richest gifts to men
 In duty's tread day by day.

A madman clasping his child,
While the storm and flood surged round,
Grew weary, and unwittingly,
 He cast his burden down.
Never counting all the cost,
Little deeming all it meant,
Not a sigh for the treasure lost,
 On his blind way he went.
But his reason never woke,
Tho' he saw his darling drown,
So pity most the man who *knows*,
 Yet casts his burden down.

MOTHER THOUGHTS.

A man of God once said: "Brethren,
Behold a living scene,
Jesus stands there, the heathen here,
And we stand thus between."

I see in the life of my son
A smaller living scene;
My boy stands here, sin beckons there,
And *I* stand now between.

I read a volume in his face,
One leaf, then another,
And feel, a deeply solemn thing
'Tis to be a mother.

I note a new light in his eyes,
More earnest and more deep.
Nature, perchance, no longer
The lad a child can keep.

Soon he'll feel the strength of manhood
Swift coursing thro' his veins.
Can the mother-love then hold him,
And guide him with love's reins?

Thus gazing on my brown-eyed boy,
For wisdom I would pray;
Wisdom to know just when to speak
The firm, kind "yea," or "nay."

Patience to tell the reason why,
To show the danger mark,
That as the man grows in the boy,
The way may not be dark.

Not to fret, nor curb his freedom
By endless code of law ;
But by Godly influence round him
A charmed circle draw.

With truth and honor's code of right
Firm grafted in his life,
Let come what may, my boy will prove
A man's strength in the strife.

If the foot be firmly planted,
Then half the fight is won ;
If true his eye, his object clear,
Success will crown my son.

'Tis well to pause and ponder,
Judge and decide with care,
For my boy's fate may much depend
On how I guide just here.

Casting aside the worthless chaff,
I'd show him as I can,
The heart, the life, God's crowning work,
An honest Christian man.

WHAT IS LOVE?.

“What is love?” the maiden cries.
“Love is life!” the youth replies.
While the skeptic, sternly taught,
Cries out coldly, “Love is naught!”

And thus the question oft goes round,
But who in full its depths can sound?
Few succeed, tho’ many try
To tell what love is—so shall I.

Love is that joy which penetrates
With subtle pow’r, and permeates
Man’s inmost heart, and very life,
And gives to him his home and wife.

Oftimes it proves itself to be
A type of heaven in constancy;
And yet, again, false to itself,
It proves a restless, fickle elf.

When in its waywardness, perchance,
Sin seems its joys to enhance,
The waters quickly bitter turn—
Pure love the counterfeit will spurn.

And in its native purity,
With all its heavenly coterie,
’Tis what my soul sums up in this:
The very essence of true bliss!

QUEEN VICTORIA.

Great of heart and true of purpose,

Since first her youthful brow was crowned,
Her reign was blest, her people blest,
Good will and love she gave and found.

She builded well, and rich rewards

Therefore her earnest efforts met.

She planted deep and watered free,
The fruit, long years will not forget.

She shed no blood, and if perchance

Others shed blood in her domain,
Whether at home or far abroad,

It grieved her heart and gave her pain.

Thus no stain blots her history.

Tho' storms must come and go, like tears,
No fierce convulsions leave their trace—
Placid her life stream flowed thro' years.

Great as queen, but greater still
As mother, in name and in heart,
This her brightest crown of glory,
She did a mother's sacred part.

Graven on her ev'ry feature
Was kindness, and in her eyes
The love light which from motherhood
Shines out ,and ne'er from mem'ry dies.

God rest thee, Queen Victoria!
 Queen over men—servant of God.
 Long live thy memory on earth,
 Immortal bloom spring from thy sod!



MAN'S HEART.

The true heart of man, in mystical clouds,
 From vision of others he wilfully shrouds.
 Kneels at the shrine of ambition or gold,
 Making believe these his happiness hold ;
 But looking within, when calm and alone,
 His starving heart cries out for bread, not a stone.

Where is the fountain which quenches the thirst?
 Where rests man's heart when the false bubbles burst?
 When lonely he stands with a want in his eyes,
 While nature's voice breathes out his longings in
 sighs?

Ask him the truth—he may answer you, nay;
 I tell you his heart unto love answers, yea.

This, then, the secret he may not confess—
 The substance, not shadow, of real happiness.
 If so be he find it, and make it his own,
 If to its fulness his nature have grown,
 Then tastes he the rapture whose source is above,
 While longings are drowned in the depths of true love.

SIMILITUDES.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

Like sudden rushing back of waters,
Which till now bore Hope outward and on,
Back to the haven whence they started,
Leaving Hope wrecked, e'en where it was born.

JOY.

Like a current, heavenly imbued,
Swift thro' the being upward welling ;
Or music, in its sweet rich fullness,
In deep thrilling harmony swelling.

HOPE.

A reaching out into the future—
A gazing thro' time's dim twilight space,
To that which draws the heart and purpose
Where'er the magnet hath found a place.

CONTENTMENT.

Seeing the good in everything,
Refreshed by the rain, cheered by the sun ;
Giving thanks o'er bount'ous board, or bare,
Enjoying rest when labor is done.

FEAR.

A trembling of the quickened fibers !
Furtive glances—some strange thing in the air !
Quick and uneven heart pulsations !
Vapors from hell seem hovering near !

LOVE.

Fountain of Joy, soul of contentment,
Crown of Hope, and destruction of Fear!
Given to man as a sacred trust,
Love is the sun of life's atmosphere.



ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

What flowers so white and fair,
Mid the dark brown of her hair?
On the white veil lightly resting,
Mid the soft folds sweetly nestling?
Orange blossoms.

'Neath the magic horseshoe sign,
Where beauteous flow'rs combine,
Above her youthful brow so fair,
She wears the waxen chaplet there,
Orange blossoms.

Breathing of a plighted vow,
Which is consummated now;
Leading to home and happiness,
A sacred joy they thus confess,
Orange blossoms.

ON POETRY.

Some love it not, nor in its voice discern
Music, which souls to answering souls unfold.
Silent music, which steals o'er hidden chords,
Waking the slumbering echoes they hold.

In fancy's fond visions they do not see
Beauties and pleasures they lightly pass o'er.
Like those who once in the poet's primrose,
Saw "a yellow primrose, and nothing more."

They deal with plain facts, naked truths, nor care
For poetry's garlands and deckings fair.
Yet, let these remember, Truth's very self
In manifold shapes and sounds may appear.

What if the heart have a message to give?
If its pent thoughts almost clamor for voice?
Must the song of the little bird be still,
Just because it is not of our own choice?

Even when harmony is not complete,
Yet may its innermost spirit prevail.
The child voice, tho' not in fullest accord,
If hushed, life's sweetest home music would fail.

What is the essence of true poetry?
Not the recurrence of sounds in accord.
As marble may have the form, and yet lack
That which proves sculpture a true art from God.

Perchance when the heart is full nigh to break,
Should some gentle verse set its currents free,
Soothing thro' tears the wounds it can't heal,
This touches the life, this is poetry.

Again, when the very dullness of life
Rests like a pall, the clouds may grow lighter
Thro' some thoughts which thrill from the poet's page,
And hearts beat faster, and eyes beam brighter.

Sometimes, thro' rough and hard exterior,
This same gentle power may creep, and touch
The one soft spot, and leave a blessing there;
Who can limit, or weigh, or tell how much?

Thus poetry has a mission to fill.

When the heart empties itself of its best,
May they who receive, in loyal kindness,
Remember the good, and forget the rest.

THE ROSE AND THE NIGHT-BLOOMING CERIUS.

I gazed in the heart of a blushing flower
And then at the sunset's hue,
When quickly the glow of both fancy caught,
My dreams all roseate grew.

I gazed in the heart of another flower,
No warm tints nestled there,
Yet a dream sprang up from its snowy depths
Like a fragrance on the air.

It held me charmed in its cold, white spell,
Most wonderful of flowers!
So late in its coming, so rare its bloom,
Holding such magic powers!

Each snowy petal seemed whispering low
To my waiting, list'ning heart.
A message it held in its chalice pure,
Of its own pure self a part.

Tho' cold in its beautiful purity,
So cold—and chaste—and white,
Yet I loved it more than the glowing rose,
Tho' it held no dream so bright!

THE EVENING STAR.

My soul looks thro' my eyes tonight
At yonder beauteous star.
So bright it burns, so clear its light
Shines thro' the distance far,
And marks the bright highway to heaven.
While not a cloud is seen,
Nor any earthly thought of mine
Comes like a cloud between.

So calm I gaze, and pondering,
Drawn nearer thro' the star
To that bright world, I this forget
Almost for that so far.
No mystery obscures my view
As I stand face to face
And see with nature's eyes that star,
And mark its dwelling place.

No glass I need, nor any book
To tell me what is there.
For when we look thro' nature's eyes
Then nature's heart is bare.
And all the great, grand universe
Is nature, by God's plan.
And he who made it all, at will
Reveals it unto man.

And so my soul is lifted up
To heights sublime, beyond confine;
E'en as the light in that star's soul
Reflects itself in mine.
While all the little things of life
Drop slowly out of sight;
I only see the beauty there,
And feel the calm tonight.



A WISH.

Love and hope fondly united,
Acme of earthly bliss,
I would I could to thee convey—
Convey them in a kiss.

I would they'd grow a part of thee,
And ne'er from thee depart.
And I declare this little wish
Comes from my very heart.

SOME LITTLE SIGN.

Do you love me Mabel? Sometimes I dream
That your heart answers responsive to mine.
Do I build my hopes on deceitful sands?
Pray give me a word, or some little sign.

Only a little sign that you love me,
That your heart answers the longings of mine.
If you only knew, Mabel, my darling,
How my heart hungers for some little sign!

Do I love you Mabel? Read in my eyes,
While I drink from your wondrous depths of blue—
Beautiful, warm lighted, magnetic depths,
Where fairy dreams and enchantments seem true.

No flower that blooms with you can compare,
Tho' dewdrops draw kisses from sunbeams bright;
The flower receives, but soon droops and dies;
Warmth of those kisses its beauty will blight.

I love you Mabel. Why are your lips dumb?
Why fear to tell me the secret I guess?
'Twere womanly modesty's richest charm
In answer to mine your love to confess.

Nay, look not away, enchantress perverse!
Chilled by your silence my hope well nigh dies,
Till sudden new warmth thrills, as love sees love
Silent but true, in the depths of your eyes.

Only a little sign that you love me,
That your heart answers the longings of mine.
If you only knew, Mabel, my darling,
How my heart treasures that one little sign.



FRAGMENT.

I cannot sing the song tonight
Which thrills my very soul.
I can but let its melody
Through all my being roll.

I cannot paint the picture fair
My inmost sight beholds,
I can but gaze enraptured,
As its beauty deep unfolds.

THE UNFINISHED WREATH.

At times a wild yearning doth seize my soul
To roam unrestrained in fancy's fields,
And gather the varied, beautiful flow'rs
Which that wonderful soil oft yields.

I'd twine them into one many-hued wreath,
Mingling mountain ferns with the daisies ;
A fresh flower here, a fading one there,
As life in its varying phases.

And here on the breast of this lily fair,
Perchance a wild weed would be pressing,
While close by her side her twin sister sweet
Knows only the dewdrops caressing.

For is this not life, since the good and true
May with opposite fates often meet ?
Earth is not the place where equal rewards
The pure in heart and life ever greet.

And near that rose,—type of womanhood, too,
Where the warm blush of modesty glows,
Might the sunflow'r raise its bold face and shock
The sweet, sensitive heart of the rose.

And I would place just a little apart
A cluster of flow'rets the fairest ;
Violets, snowdrops, rosebuds and pansies—
As children, the sweetest and dearest.

But here I drop the wreath I was wishing
(Even trying while wishing) to weave,
Else tears will water, instead of the dew,
My flowers o'er which I now grieve.

For fancy sees yon sad weeping willow
Wide spreading its long drooping wings,
While each day beneath its sorrowful shade
Some sweet flower its dead heart flings.

Thus the good and beautiful of earth
Droop and die like fancy's fair flowers ;
While perchance the wild weeds and thistles live
And flourish, 'neath sunshine and showers.



MOTHER LOVE.

Oh, mother love, which broodeth
O'er the birdlings in the nest !

Oh, mother love, which clasbeth
The baby to the breast !

'Tis the same the wide world o'er,
Throughout creation's range,
The strongest love, and purest,
The love most free from change.

THE HERMIT.

Yes, he can talk to God thro' nature,
Can coach his soul in holy lore;
No anger there, for no temptation,
In peaceful calm he may adore.

So high and holy his reflections,
It seems that heaven is very near;
It may be near, and if he listen,
A fuller song his soul may hear.

Tho' passive, yet he may be guilty,
By doing not the good he can;
Letting the fall'n lie, the dying die,
He thus may deeply sin 'gainst man.

He should come out from cloistered shelter,
And freely mingle in the strife;
Full facing sin in open combat,
Strength'ning his own and others' life.

The wheat and tares must grow *together*
Until the last great harvest day.
Shut not the eyes in solitude
While hungry souls wander astray.

Such hermits belong to olden times;
A different kind may live today—
Soul hermits, who wrap their mantles round,
And from brother souls draw far away.

But in what sphere of life or station,
Two confessions must arise as one,
From the humble heart, and penitent:
"We have done, and we have left undone."



THE WOMANLY WOMAN.

As in nature, so in human life
The reflux wave may rush back too far,
Even over the blessed spot called home,
And some of its purest treasures mar.

Spared be that type of womanhood blest
Which uplifts and sweetens human life;
The old time lullaby still singing,
Yet filling her brave place in the strife.

Tho' nations may rise and nations fall,
Tho' much may die or lose its name,
Whatever changes of life or times,
May the womanly woman remain.

LOVE'S TRIAL.

There were tears in her eyes at their parting;

There were tears in her voice as she said:

"I know it is best, since hopeless our love,

That we bury it now as tho' dead!"

Deep hide it from sight, nor call its dear name,

Which only adds to the struggle and pain.

Stern fate has said, 'Nay,' and we must obey.

Say now farewell, nor meet thus again."

"It may be best—for you say it is best,"

Slowly he spoke, not turning away.

"But so strong and alive the love in my breast,

I cannot bury it today.

Tho' the tide is strong, and the wind is wrong,

And no lights in the dim distance start,

I bid not farewell to you and to hope

Till my lips truly echo my heart.

Our case is on trial, the jury out.

My own heart is the foreman at will.

Demurrer be, dear, till further you hear;

I only pray you be constant still.

Most faithful witness has pleaded for love,

Final judgment will be true and best,

And while our court (ship) adjourns for today,

Our case on its merits shall rest."

Years after, a little golden-haired girl
Sweetly said to her father one day:
"I'm so glad, papa, that you and mamma
Did not bury your dear love away."



ADVICE.

Would success reward your efforts,
Call not wild Babel voices, Fate.
Lend your ear to one true calling;
Young man, young woman, concentrate.

Would you have life's burden lighter,
Yet not one duty's call deny?
Choose but life's true things and needful;
Young man, young woman, simplify.

Would you rise to heights of greatness?
Consider greatness in its truth.
Graft in your life its principles,
Young man, young woman, in your youth.

A TRIBUTE.

Who does not reverence the noble oak,
Standing erect thro' all the storms of years?
Nor ever turned from its high course aside
By sunshine's smiles, nor yet by nature's tears.

Much more, with voice and heart in true accord,
Is honor due the man of reverend years,
Who lives his life on lofty plane and true,
Nor turns aside for smiles of life, nor tears.

He falters not when loneliness oppresses,
Nor wearies of his task for others' weal;
Fearless he points with no uncertain finger
To truths which ev'ry list'ning heart must feel.

His eyes glow with their own peculiar fire,
When the strong soul rises in its might.
He lifts his voice in solemn, holy warning,
Then shows the glory which will crown the right.

Great in his grand humility and virtues,
He stands for much which will not pass away—
Truth cannot die, and they who teach and love it,
Like truth must live thro' eternity's day.

SPIRIT THOUGHTS.

Like sparks from the anvil flying

Beneath the driven steel;

Like silvery tones resounding,

When bells of ev'ning peal;

So may man's spirit scintillate,

When struck by truth divine;

So rings the music of his life,

When heaven and earth combine.

Like springs in the arid desert,

Like stars spangling the dark,

God's holy words are to the soul

Which will but hear and mark.

The soul which will clear its vision,

Strip off earth's dazzling veil,

And look intent and steadfastly

On that which cannot fail.

What tho' the false lights glitter bright?

They fail dark death to cheer.

Spirit of man, look to thy God!

And if not there, then *where*?

LIFE'S LITTLE CARES.

The heart has many pangs to bear,
The body has its pain,
And there is ceaseless wear and tear
Upon the human brain.

Tho' iron may resist hard blows,
It yet will yield to rust.
Great oaks will yield to steady strokes,
Tho' they may brave the gust.

So the heart, the mind, the body,
Bearing each its load,
Traveling oft in weariness
Along life's heavy road,

May better stand the weighty ill
Which does not often come,
Than bear the rasping daily pricks
Which fret the lives of some.

They bind us not with heavy chains,
These little cares of life;
They twine about us little cords
Numberless, and rife

With suffering all unpitied;
Because the world's cold gaze
Has little sympathy for grief
Which makes no thrilling blaze.

And yet the brown hair turns to gray,
 Sadder the gentle face,
And on the brow so smooth and fair
 These small cares leave their trace.

Not all at once, as tho' quick blight
 Had made life's roses die;
But gradually they fade away,
 As the slow years pass by.

Oh! tired hearts, minds and bodies,
 Rest will come at last.
These torturing pricks will cease to fret
 When life's earth-stage is past.



REST.

Fully relaxed the tired brain,
Freed nerves and limbs from ev'ry strain,
Hands lightly folded on the breast,
Gently closed eyes; this pictures rest.

If the short rest, or if the long,
These attributes to both belong,
But dreams of one in truth may live
When longer rest truer joys give.

USELESS BURDENS.

Not every burden people bear
Needs to be borne.
For useless crosses carried here,
No crown is worn.

With honest purpose sift the wheat,
Behold the chaff.

If wise, your burden may decrease
By almost half.

With truth's clear vision scan the things
Which make up life.

Sharp define 'twix honor's battle
And empty strife.

From among life's varied pleasures,
Choose but the best.

Real jems are the only treasures,
Let go the rest.

And just here a strain will cease,
The air will clear;
Life's yoke more easy prove, the load
Lighter to bear.

The slaves of fashion, vice, and greed,
With foolish vim,
Knowingly feed on chaff, and reap
The sequence grim.

Then when a holy voice calls clear
By night and morn,
To bear the needful load, perchance
The strength is gone.

But why the useless burdens choose?
This need not be.
If they a truer way would learn
Life's end to see.

Oh, for a glass, a powerful lens,
The truth to view!
Oh, for a sword with keenest edge
The line to hew!

Yet God gives power to each soul
To choose, to see.
How this is used, shapes destinies
Thro' eternity.

A GLIMPSE.

I saw a man, upon whose face
Was written, in figures strict,
Traces of contending passions
Which did in his soul conflict.

Midst a motley throng I saw him,
Caught thought flashes from his eyes—
Strangely blended, quickly changeful,
Now all candor, now disguise.

And while gazing thus, I wondered
What beneath the surface lay,
As a lake's strange, local movements
Draw the eye and mind that way.

But I never knew the sequel,
Nor which force won in that fight,
For even while I watched and wondered,
He vanished out of my sight.

What a depth has human nature!
How it hides what in it lay!
I only know in that man's soul
Contending passions raged that day.

THE INNER CHAMBER.

There's an inner chamber of each soul
Through whose portal none have stept,
Within whose confines, perchance, for years
Astounding secrets have slept.

If sudden the whole opened to view,
Man saw man in very truth,
No tongue could prophesy the sequel ;
Certify for age or youth.

Oh ! what quick change of mind and feeling
As wedded thoughts wrench apart !
Some eyes would rather close forever,
Than look, to stab through the heart !

But Truth, a double flag uplifting,
Waves it o'er the pictured scene ;
"Tho' forms of darkness rise," proclaiming,
"Angels of light shine between."

ANGELS LISTENED.

Once, in a busy week-day time,
The church bell rang its faithful chime.
Shepherd called flock to kneel and pray,
As truly as 'twere the Lord's day;
But when he rose and looked around,
His scattered sheep could not be found,
Save one, which heeded his true call,
That one no better than them all,
Except it be, hearing that cry,
It softly answered in reply.

But ere the hour passed away,
While these two lowly knelt to pray,
Legions of angels gathered round,
And listened to the holy sound.
A benediction blessed the place,
And lighted up the preacher's face,
While all his words sank deep and true
Into the lonely, list'ning pew.
And Duty was as royal crowned
As if a thousand knelt around.

A POET PAUSED IN GLOOMY THOUGHT.

A poet paused in gloomy thought—
Too *sad* his song seemed to be ;
Yet soft his soul kept whispering :
“Oh Lord ! the song’s from Thee.”

Then quick he wrote and wrote the truth,
The truth as to him given ;
Men called it genius, but *he* knew
The praise belonged to heaven.

He was simply the messenger,
Who yet might go far astray,
But for the gentle whisperings
Which guided him all the way.

What praise that he should simply voice
The song heaven gave to him ?
That he drink, then give to others
The cup God filled to the brim ?



AN INVOCATION.

Oh Truth ! in Thy perfect beauty !
Oh Justice ! in Thy majesty sublime !
From highest heaven shine thro’ shades of time
And bless crowned or suffering Duty.

THE LIGHT.

A soul cried out, from gloom of doubt:
 “Oh God, 'tis dark! I cannot see!
I do but grope and lose the way;
 A haunting horror bides with me!

Long have I walked the narrow way,
 And drank the living waters free;
Yet now I droop, amid the dark;
 Where is the light which guided me?”

While, lo! the light shone just as bright,
 For all the cloud floating between.
As truth is truth for evermore,
 If seen by man, or if unseen.

At last he knelt, trying to feel,
 And raised an altar up of prayer;
Each prayer a stone, beneath whose weight,
 Buried at last were doubt and fear.

Then up he rose, and cried aloud:
 “Oh God, the light! I see the light!”
Then boldly thro' the valley passed,
 And went rejoicing, out of sight.

SWEET ALICE.

Heaven seemed nearer, faith seemed clearer,
To sweet Alice when she prayed
Viewing the stars thro' open space,
In shining glory arrayed.

And silence she craved to guard thought
In upward journey to God.
Thus the soul in union blended
In sweetest and best accord.

Then borne on wings of love and faith,
In confidence ascending,
God's spirit seemed to meet and bless,
In quick response descending.

Not only as in duty bound,
Nor with effort strained she prayed;
But joyfully and naturally,
As child to father she said:

“My Father, who in heaven art,
Most hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
As in heaven, on earth the same.

Give me this day my daily bread,
Forgive, as I have forgiven.
Into temptation lead not me;
Keep and fit me for heaven.”

Then softly: "Now I lay me down,"
And breathed out her thoughts to God,
Vapors of incense, without words,
Melodies in deep accord.

When winter's cold her window closed,
She craved not the stars in vain,
For ruin touched a finger there,
And left her a broken pane.

It might be chance, it might not be,
True prayer ne'er rises in vain,
But God her sweetest thoughts received
Thro' that broken window pane.



THE FLOWER TRUTH.

If all the Virtues and the flowers
Could mingle in confusion sweet—
If we could see and touch and choose
Just one, where these two natures meet,

I'd have the zephyrs bear me swift
And, eagerly as bounding youth,
But tenderly and reverently,
I'd choose for mine the flower Truth.

TOO LATE.

When it is too late,

 You may gaze on friendship dead,
And sigh to think your very hand
 Its life blood shed.

When it is too late,

 Lonely, heartsick, and forlorn,
You may crave one breath of the love
 Which now you scorn.

When it is too late,

 Kneeling by a mother's grave,
You may repent the needless pain
 And care you gave.

When it is too late,

 Looking back thro' wasted years,
You may see some things you have lost,
 Thro' bitter tears.

Saddest cry: "Too Late!"

 Would that such could never be.
Oh, soul, awake! nor let this cry
 Be true of thee!

A MOTHER'S DREAMS.

In a dream I saw a river,
And on its wide, dark breast,
In a slowly moving vessel
Laid a babe at rest.

Snowy white was that wee vessel,
Sweet the flowers it bore ;
While music soft seemed to the ear,
Angel whisperings pure.

Just as the sun sank in the west,
Far out of view they swept.
"Oh, little one!" I longing cried,
And then I woke, and wept.

* * *

Again I slept—again I dreamed—
A sweet, glad dream to me,
For on a mossy bed, 'mid flowers,
I resting seemed to be.

While near me rolled a golden stream
By rainbow arches spanned,
While on its bank, in glory clad,
I saw the great Lord stand.

Glorious was his majesty!
And yet his looks so mild,
As in his gentle arms he took
Once more, a little child.

He placed it on my yearning breast
And blessed me, as he smiled;
While to my joyous heart I pressed
My living, not dead, child!

And as a snowy little hand
My face caressing seeks,
A flood of heaven's happy tears
Like pearls flow down my cheeks.

Then death's dark stream was all forgot
The little casket white.
The truth burst full upon my soul
And filled all things with light.

As in my raptured arms I held
My sainted little child,
"I thank thee God!" I murmured low,
And then I woke, and smiled.



LOVE'S GARLAND.

May Love its precious garland twine
Forever round thy youthful brow;
May the fragrance of its flowers waft
Joy to thy heart, ever, as now.

CHILD SAINTS.

May we not behold our children
When the mystic cur-tains furl,
Walking through the golden streets,
Playing round the gates of pearl?

Singing the glad songs children love;
Happy in that blessed clime,
While our darlings' voices laugh with joy
When the bells of heaven chime!

Oh joy to see our children thus!
The children to us given,
Taken of God that so we might
Have treasures more in heaven.

And when some day we called shall be
To join them in that upper sphere,
Our little ones may hold the crowns
For each of us to wear.

THE SOLITUDES.

Standing alone, 'mid nature's solitudes,
A sense oppressed with awe mysterious,
Descends on man, and shrouds his being round;
Pressing homeward on his inner senses
A loneliness intense, and seldom found.

The virgin forest teems with goodly stores,
Vast possibilities lie in its depths,
Yet if no answering nature be there,
Pity the man, however else blessed,
Tho' his work rise up like a monument,
It costs his heart more than is dreamed or guessed.

So with God's messengers beyond the seas,
Who have left home and friends for his dear sake;
Alone they stand 'mid heathen solitudes,
Oppressed as only they who feel can know;
Besides the dangers which oft surround them,
Unknown to us who sleep in safety's peace.

Yet some, thro' narrowness or soul blindness,
Feel not the warmth of Christian sympathy
For, and with, these soldiers of the cross.

Yet when the veil by God's hand is lifted,
Behold a glory past the thought of man,
Shall crown his faithful soldiers near or far;
Make them forget the drear, heart hungry days;

The lonely way, bereft of sympathy,
Whole hearted human sympathy, so prized.

Oh ye who rest 'neath fruitful vines at home,
Remember those who toil mid heathen wilds!

ON THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES.

In this poem a very cursory view is given of the War Between the States, and a few incidents therein, with no attempt at regular or full treatment. In it Justice, Truth, Mercy, Pity and Conscience are distinctly personified.

Justice, smarting from sundry wounds,
Raised the war horn and blew a ringing blast,
Which echoed and re-echoed till at last
The tramp of countless horse resounds.

From North, from South, the legions rise.
Oh, Justice, look on thy champions bold!
Alas! that their shout should a discord hold
As is rises up to the skies.

The tents are pitched, the flags unfurled—
Yea, flags, for on heaven's impartial breeze,
Besides the old stars and stripes, Justice sees
A new flag rise before the world.

Truth, brooding o'er the martial scene,
From her high vantage ground a new line draws;
Viewing the whole, knowing the every cause,
She marks her sons and foes between.

The line is clearly drawn. Which way?
Truth, with unerring vision, claims her own,
In her own beauty clad, of error shorn,
And some wear the blue, some the gray.

Fancy one instant pauses here,
Soul to soul unveiled, Truth's sons would right the
 wrong,
Would span the breach, make the weak places
 strong.

Alas! the structure breaks in air!

To arms! To arms! the bugle calls.
See the rushing lines of blue and gray!
The drum beat rolls deep, mixed passions hold
 sway,
Brother by brother's own hand falls!

Oh, cruel, raging, blighting war!
Tho' on thy bloody fields valor stands high,
And in story its fame shall never die,
Hearts ache and break beneath thy law.

As raged the conflict one sad day,
Two boys, twin brothers in life and in heart,
Who seemed of courage its own self a part,
Pressed forward, in jackets of gray.

Deadly the shot from the North side,
Down on the boys and their brave comrades poured.
"To your knees! quick fire, and quick reload!"
The command, while the ranks gaped wide.

Vain effort! vain the loss of life,
The Southern general saw, and cried, "Retreat!"
But one brave lad* heard not, nor saw defeat,
Being far frontward in the strife.

His eyes saw nothing but the foe,
And kneeling there, an instant kept the field.
But youth, nor valor, nor love could then shield
This lone brave heart from war's dark woe.

Meantime his brother missed his face,
And leaping back, heedless of all alarms,
He caught his bleeding darling in his arms,
And quickly bore him from the place.

Then did Pity weep, bending low,
And hand in hand with Mercy, vigil kept
Beside the dying boy, whose brother wept,
And strained to catch each whisper low.

Sacred each word, sacred the end,
The brave, unfaltering end. Tho' mother
And home were far, brother watched by brother,
Whose fond hearts death's touch soon would rend.

In Virginia, a lonely grave,
'Neath marble slab, tells how this same brave youth
For sixteen summers lived the soul of truth,
Then his life for his country gave.

*Hampden Hay Wyman.

To arms! To arms! the bugles call;
Glittering sword blades mark the crimson way.
The tear must dry, sterner feelings hold sway;
Behold how horse and riders fall!

I scarce can sing this dreary song.
Like scythes thro' the fields of ripe wheat sweeping,
A rich human harvest war kept reaping;
Heaven recording right and wrong.

Yet, sometimes Pity's tears could dry,
And Mercy smile, to see human kindness
Bind the wounds given in human blindness.
Truth witnessed such with her own eye.

Saw canteens offered thirsty lips,
Saw warm blankets over suffering thrown,
Whether blue or gray the color then worn.
Thus silv'ry light the dark cloud tips.

Once prison trains, in long, slow line,
Fresh from the field, bore hungry men in blue.
That they would pass that way, good women knew,
Who loved to kneel at Mercy's shrine.

From this long line of captive life
Eager hands reached out for the tempting cheer,
And strained the ear those soft, kind words to hear
From some "Rebel's" mother or wife.

Sudden a soldier's heart gave way—
Seeing a little child, so like his own,
He caught it in his arms, revenge all flown—
Kissed it—whose father wore the gray.

Thus are men tender, thus they feel;
Tho' that which makes them so be out of use,
And ruder forces—passions—are turned loose,
Perchance a child may break the steel.

They pass. Again the bugle calls,
That silvery-tongued heralder of death!
The smoke of battle stifles the last breath,
As man by his countryman falls.

At last the stripes and stars held sway;
Per force the bonny Southern flag was furled;
Tho' still it floats in story o'er the world,
Held by the men who wore the gray.

This stern war throws long shadows back,
Dark shadows, which haply time is paling.
Brighter gleams show valor crowned or failing;
But one spot forever is black.

Some things we think, some things we know;
Iron shackles are no dream, nor can die
The soul's abhoring of a fixed human eye—
Thus Davis in Fortress Monroe.

But later, Mercy touched those bars;
To save shame, but more for goodness of heart,
And duty, a doctor* did kindest part,
And his flag bore the stripes and stars.

Thus, as in all human conflict,
Two forces held their vacillating sway;
Seen and unseen, they won or lost the day,
And thus did joy or pain inflict.

Enough. My muse here ends her song.
The fierce civil strife, with its woes, at last,
Holding its intricate problems, is past—
Those deep problems of right and wrong.

* * *

The Gray stood firm where ruin smote the land;
The Blue wore laurel wreath where plenty smiled.
I know not how, but Conscience reconciled,
With both, perchance, walked hand in hand.

*Dr. John J. Craven.

WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?

Worlds revolving round worlds in space,
With their mysterious burdens fraught;
Numberless stars and systems of stars;
The great shining sun—this hath God wrought.

Now, suddenly from the giddy heights,
Where almost lost, thought rushes on thought,
Rest on Earth, so small, and yet so vast;
Behold man, and know, *this* hath God wrought.

Wonderful man, Earth's crown of glory!
Beautiful work, tho' battered and scarred!
Altho' a wail runs thro' the story,
Man was made in the image of God.

And he is still great; he can whisper
And be heard hundreds of miles away.
Let him touch the magic telegraph,
And the whole world is circled today.

He is even beck'ning the planets.
Will they answer? Can they ever see?
Methinks man's limit is set, *thus far*,
Earth and sea, time and eternity.

Now plunge down into the mighty deep,
With all its marvelous millions fraught;
White mountain waves on the fierce storm's breath,
Then stillness and peace; this hath God wrought.

See the white ships, the balloon in space;
See lightning and steam work, by man taught;
Countless machines well doing their task;
All this, thro' his creatures, God hath wrought.

Thus the heavens declare His glory;
Earth showeth His handywork, and naught
Can live, or move, or have its being
Save through Him, for all things hath God
wrought.



OH WONDROUS CALM!

Soft as moonbeams thoughts come stealing
O'er the still and tranquil soul.
Where the heart-land lies receptive
Gently waves from far seas roll.

Hark, the lowly moaning billows!
Inward caverns echoing—
Like the rustle of spread pinions—
Like the faint notes far birds sing.

Sweetly float the gentle murmurs;
Not a breath disturbs the calm.
All the storms and wounds and longings
Find in this retreat a balm.

SOUL LIFE.

Viewed as the being man can view,
Three distinct strata has soul-life.
The lowest is of blackest shade
And trembles with internal strife.

And from it brazen flashes leap,
And heavy anguish loads the air;
It is the kingdom of the lost!
And on its throne reigns grim Despair.

Next comes the earth-life with its taint
Of hell, and foretaste of heaven.
To sink or rise, to live or die,
To man the choice is given.

The crowning stratum of soul life—
Falter tongue, nor mar the story,
For all the stars of nameless space,
If met, could but hint its glory.



HE TOUCHED THE HARP.

He touched the harp, and lingered where
Its very soul seemed breathing sighs.
So tenderly it rose and fell,
So soft and low each echo dies.

And list'ning hearts and longings merged
In that refrain their own heart-cries.
Unspoken yearnings found a voice
And sympathy, in those low sighs.

TRANSITIONS.

As lovely flowers rear their heads
From dark and gloomy earth,
So beauties rare of mind and heart,
May have an humble birth.

As crowning grace of spire and dome
Claim solid, plain foundation,
As art builds all her monuments
On years of preparation,

So must a stratum lie below
The warble of the heart's full song.
Delights which only some may know
Spring up where toil first passed along.

But Oh! the gladness and the bliss
To rise above the things which cloy,
Till almost Eden's fields and flow'rs
Seem wafting down to us their joy!

MUSIC AND POETRY.

Somewhere in blending of soul life they meet,
 Breathing their perfume of harmony sweet.
 Whispering, echoing, each unto each,
 From valley to zenith where soul voices reach.

Loud on the mountain top swells the rich strain,
 Sinking in sound waves to valley again.
 Only to sigh low, and quivering float,
 Dying in tenderest vibrating note.

Thrilling the heart which by nature can feel
 All the soft touches which over it steal.
 If music or poetry waken the strain,
 Loftier, purer heights may the soul gain.

Most happy and blest are these kindred pow'rs
 When yielding their sweetness in mingled show'rs.
 No note of discord can find there a place,
 Where music and poetry meeting, embrace.



TO THE DICTIONARY.

Thy name seems far from poetry,
 Yet in thy boundary there lies
 The scattered elements from which
 Thought's wondrous structures all arise.
 And now, methinks in thy stern arms
 Lie beauties never seen before.
 So rich and deep! and as we look
 Thy true lines broad and broader grow.

WHERE DANGER LIES.

Not only in the mighty deep,
Nor where Earth's firm rocks tremble;
Nor is all told when we behold
Storms' terrors all assemble.

In mankind's hate and woman's guile,
That dangers be, we needs must see;
And oh! a dart strikes thro' the heart
At friendship's silent treachery!

Yet closer draw the circle round,
And inward turn thy searching eyes,
And own the truth, as often seen,
In thine own heart-depths danger lies.

STRONG AND SWEET.

“Strong and sweet,” an artist said,
Gazing on a pictured face.
This she saw reflected there,
This her artist eyes could trace.

“Strong and sweet,” her very words,
And I knew them for the truth;
Having studied that dear face
Since the dawn-time of my youth.

“Strong and sweet,” two simple words,
But with memories replete.
Looking on my mother’s face,
“Yes,” I echoed, “strong and sweet.”



DAINTY LITTLE ROSALEE.

Dainty little Rosalee,
Tripping lightly to and fro!
Snowy dress above her knee
Rivaled by the limbs below.

Roguish dimples in her cheek
Playing hide and seek with smiles.
True her dance is quite unique,
Yet it all my care beguiles.

See the merry laughing eyes,
'Neath the tossing curls of gold!
“Baby’s tired,” now she cries,
And my loving arms enfold.

OUR IDEAL.

When we can fix our wandering eyes,
In realms of thought we may behold
Visions of beauty rare unfold,
To guide and help the soul uprise.

Looking intent, one form grows clear,
And rises higher than the rest ;
If we see true, it is the best,
And in that light it seems so near.

We fain would clasp, nor let it go,
But as we reach, 'tis further on ;
Tho' not far from us is it gone,
If we the pathway truly know.

Oh, happy could we feel its heart
Throb in our own, in very truth !
Its strong pulse stir our age and youth ;
Our Ideal form of us a part.

VERSES.

“Dost thou fear God?” a strict voice said
Unto a gentle child,
Who wisdom learned in purest school
And from a teacher mild.

“Yea, sir, I fear, but love him more.”
Oh wealth without alloy!
The treasure of a loving heart
Holds germs of heaven’s joy!



LIKE YIELDS LIKE.

Like yields like in nature’s realm—
Harvest cheer the seed must suit.
Yet we see in life’s broad fields
Duty’s seeds yield golden fruit.

But the strangeness takes its flight,
All questions die, when we behold
(Knowing the life is in the heart,)
In duty’s seeds lie germs of gold.

GOD'S HILLS.

Behold God's hills, how high they rise !

The mystic meaning keep,
And rising to their highest heights,
Behold His depths how deep !

I cannot rise so high, nor see
So far, tho' fain I would.
But half way up the mount I stand,
The highest I have stood.

If earth would loose its heavy hold,
Nor clog the soul's ascent,
'Twere easier to gain the heights,
And see life's true intent.

But standing thus, God's universe
I view as best I can,
And note the rich gifts he bestows
On nature and on man.

The sturdy oak lifts high its arms,
To meet the sun and showers ;
But often men of noble make
Misuse God-given powers.

So many things before man rise,
In such bewild'ring mass,
The time is short, and while he waits,
The chance to choose may pass.

Whether to toil, year after year,
Raiment and food to gain;
And from many books learn only
The mind, not heart, to train;

Or consecrate the gifts of God;
To Him service render;
Real work, and confidence supreme,
And love unfeigned, and tender.

Thus would the strong soul stronger grow,
Joy and peace insuring,
While angel voices would ring out
New notes of adoring.

A something to the soul would sing
Where all is silent now;
A void be filled, a longing hushed,
Remembered a past vow.

The parched and lonely waste would bloom
Beneath God's dew of grace;
And noblest heights by man be reached;
New views his sight embrace.

Behold God's hills, how high they rise!
The mystic meaning keep,
And rising to their highest heights
Behold His depths how deep!

Preface to Family Edition

In arranging my poems for publication, I had to pass judgment on a miscellaneous collection, written at various periods, from childhood to the present time. As I picked up various poems and glanced over them, I realized that I was unwilling to submit certain ones, a considerable number, to the public eye, yet I felt reluctant, and even unwilling, to discard them, feeling sure they would possess interest for my family circle and some friends ; hence these additional poems, which convert this book into a Family edition.

J. A. B.

(Revised ad libitum.)

MY MUSE.

False pride nor false humility,
Shall come between my Muse and me.
So long we've lived in sympathy—
In sighs or transports glad and free.

Since rosy childhood, thro' the years,
Laden with happiness or cares,
As friend with friend heart-treasure shares,
My Muse has known my smiles and tears.

Never while thy soft melody
Brings tender hours back to me,
Shall heart, or voice, or memory
My gentle Muse, prove false to thee.

AN EASTER MEMORY.

Silence filled the holy temple.
The sun cast its first rays
Thro' the brilliant eastern window
On the gladdest of earth's days.

And the air seemed filled with glory
Which elsewhere was not found.
Above, around, a mystic charm!
The place was holy ground.

Wreaths of flowers and evergreens
Breathing their glad token,
The resurrection story proved
Plainer than words spoken.

They twined about, those flowers fair,
Dispelling all past gloom;
Teaching the glad eye, everywhere
Life's victory o'er the tomb.

Within this court of God's own house,
The great Judge listening,
Not priest, but lawyer thus proclaimed:
(His children witnessing.)

“The Lord is risen!” “There is no death!”
Reverent his voice resounds.
“The Lord is in his holy temple!”
Again the clear voice sounds.

So tall, and fair, and grand he stood,
Speaking those words of trust.
The noblest of creation's works,
A good man and a just.

His eyes were raised, those eyes cf blue ;
And o'er that little band,
The peace of God seemed brooding,
Mysterious, real and grand !

Oh holy words, and holy sight !
The village church adorning.
Memory's purest picture dawned
That sacred Easter morning.

MUSINGS.

My father, would that I tonight
Could feel once more thy fond embrace!
I'd clasp thy neck, nor let thee go,
And press warm kisses on thy face.
Just once again to feel thy lips
In loving touch on brow and cheek!
To see thy blue eyes melt with love,
And hear again thy clear voice speak.
To feel thy hand rest on my head,
While thy looks with love o'erflow;
To hear you say just once, "My child,"
As in the happy long ago.

Oh! for one more cheery Christmas-eve,
All gathered round our cozy hearth!
To hear you tell of Santa Claus
And arouse our childish mirth.
To see the dear old home once more,
Our home, as it used to be.
Memory paints the picture bright,
All the colors are fresh to me.
But it can't be home without papa,
Not the home it used to be.
As the sky could never look the same
If half of its light should flee.

HIS WELCOME.

Oh! will he say, "Welcome, my child,"
When we meet on that golden shore?
And will he take me into his arms
So tenderly, as of yore?

Will he speak the same old words of love,
As he gently smoothes my tresses?
Will he press my willing hand in his?
Oh, I weep for such caresses!

Wait, wait, my soul, in patience wait!
Endure the chastening rod.
A little while, and we shall meet
In the garden of our God.

LITTLE GIRL'S MAY QUEEN SPEECH.

Welcome! Glad welcome, my dear friends!

And thanks for homage sweet.

Your lovely flowers and happy smiles,

Thrill me with joy complete.

I trust my youtful head shall ne'er

Bedim this crown so bright.

This little hand I promise you,

This sceptre holds for right.

With followers so sweet and fair,

And Cupid true, tho' sly,

And such a band of fairy friends,

Never was queen so proud as I.

Once more to one and all I give

A royal welcome now,

And may the joy which crowns tonight,

Long linger on each brow.

VAGARIES.

At times my inmost soul is fired
With emotions ill defined.
Oh! would that I could them express—
Vague aspirations of my mind!

It may be in maturer years,
Impromptu, I can full explain
Every feeling which pulsates
My youthful heart and busy brain.

But then perhaps these will be fled,
And harder thoughts rule in their stead;
And I would rather feel, unsaid,
Than have these cherished feelings dead.

Thrill on my heart, work on my brain,
Nor try to tell what in you lies;
Content that you thro' life may pass
And these emotions not despise.

MARGARET'S LOVE.

Did he never guess I loved him,
When he watched my girlish cheek
Turn red with conscious blushes,
When he my name would speak?

Did he never guess I loved him,
When he saw my artless eyes,
Whene'er he smiled upon me,
Light up with glad surprise?

I fear he guessed it all too well;
For in that spring of youth,
Knowing naught of arts and wiles,
I could not hide the truth.

I knew not 'twas unmaidenly
To love and not be loved;
But had I known it, still I fear,
My love had been unmoved.

I have watched him smile on others
And envied their glad lot,
Despite a whispered warning:
"Ah child, he loves you not!"

I know he did not love me;
I knew it then, as now.
Yet my soul with bliss was flooded
As at his shrine 'twould bow.

As almost child, he oft gave me
 A flower, or tender word.
 And at his very voice my heart
 With wild emotions stirred.

I found he had a chosen love,
 But my heart was still unmoved.
 Not that I hoped, or had an aim,
 I loved—because—I loved.

Ah me! 'twas pitiful to see
 Such fresh, true love all lost!
 Yet was all lost? Perchance the joy
 Excelled the pain it cost!



A MEMORY.

Oh sacred memory of love past!
 Tho' by none other thou art prized,
 I'll cherish thee even to the last,
 And never shalt thou be despised.

Some smile at maiden's early love,
 And call it transitory—vain.
 They little know the maiden's heart,
 Nor how it harbors joy and pain.
 To form new links in love's long chain,
 The young are glad, they say, and free.
 True—but Oh! they cannot see
 A tender, ling'ring memory!

XERXES.

(Written at about the age of 11 years.)

Xerxes was our noble dog.

And since it is he's dead,
We never wish to hear again
That Xerx, our dog, is dead.

We all shed a tear for the poor dog's sake,
Tho' we knew it was all in vain;
For death had gained a vict'ry then
We ne'er could take back again.

(Only the first and last verses can be recalled by
memory at this late date.)



HAPPY GIRL.

Full of fun and frolic,
Sporting with the boys.
Knowing naught of heartache,
But only these light joys.

Beware, lest a sensation new,
Sudden invade your heart,
And unprepared, a blushing girl
Is struck by Cupid's dart!

REQUITED LOVE.

Let older, wiser heads than mine
Tell of that tranquil joy, which springs
From hearts united still in love,
Tho' o'er them age his mantle flings.

For me, I'd rather write awhile
Of youth's first passion, and the dreams
Too sweet, by far, for utterance—
A future lit with golden beams.

Young Love, in doubt and fearfulness,
Yet boldly, shows his heart's desire.
Crowned with success, behold two hearts
Aglow with love's mysterious fire!

And as we contemplate this sight,
We wonder is there earthly bliss,
From any cause, at any age,
Which dare compare itself with this!

MATTIE'S PLEA.

(Written at about the age of 14 years.)

"In that fair, beautiful book of thine,
 Write it not down, dear Lord, this time;
Let little Mattie off just this once,
 Don't soil the page nor break the rhyme.

Mamma says babies records rhyme,
 Their part of thy book is ever white.
I'm nearly a baby, mamma says,
 Yet I've been doing what wasn't right.

But I knew not 'twould be so bad,
 This Sunday morn ere I went to pray,
To make my dolly a pretty new gown;
 I'll never repeat it on thy good day.

So I thought I'd pray you write it not down;
 For I don't want blots and discords to be
Soiling the page and breaking the rhyme
 In the record you are keeping of me."

Plead on, sweet one; thy little voice
 Will surely touch the Savior's heart.
Oh, would that sinners all might be
 Repentant, earnest, as thou art!

THE TEARDROP.

(Regarding Anna Benson, a little girl of Atlanta, Ga.)

Watching a little child one day,
I felt a throb of strange surprise,
For smiles played o'er her winsome face,
Yet tears were in her azure eyes.

And oft I met her in the way,
And unaware would heave a sigh,
Seeing the little one still bore
The limpid tear in her blue eye.

“My little girl,” one day I said,
“If I may kindly ask you why,
Pray tell me what doth cause alway
The teardrop in thy gentle eye?”

“God placed it there,” she softly said,
“But, sir, in truth, I know not why.”
Ah me! how lovely then she seemed,
With the trembling tear in her eye.

But God so loved His little one
He called her early home on high;
And as she left this vale of woe
The teardrop fell from her blue eye.

REMORSE.

Alone I stand on a lone rock
Whose lofty tips the blue clouds seek.
This seems more desolate to me
Than any other peak.
Therefore I come; for sympathy
The human heart will ever crave;
And when I found it not 'mong men,
I sought what nature gave.

2

With veiled heart among men I walk,
None my inmost self can see,
They only know my wealth and name,
And blindly envy me.
But when I reach this lone, bare rock,
Where never a flower bloomed,
It seems my own life's counterpart—
To desolation doomed.
With none to pity, nor to blame,
On this drear rock I'm sadly free
In passionate, remorseful grief,
To vent my misery!

3

Oh, hydra-headed curse, Remorse!
Tho' I deserve my wretched fate,
Since my waking hours thou hauntest,
My very life I hate.

Even in sleep sometimes I seem
Like some poor hunted stag at bay—
I hang upon a rocky cliff ;
As bloodhounds rush that way,
My straining limbs let go their hold,
And down, far down, with guilt I go,
Fast whirling thro' the giddy space
To the death rocks below !
But stop ! A sudden jerk, a halt !
Quick waters over me break,
Cold waters, of remorse, regret.
I shudder, groan, and wake !

4

One deed—a thoughtless, cruel deed,
Committed many years ago,
(Not so many actual years—
To me an age of woe,)
Is that which shadows all my life ;
A shameful deed, unmanly, base,
A hundred times repented of,
But that cannot erase
Even the haunting memory ;
While she, whose life I blighted,
Can gain no solace by my woe,
Who most falsely plighted
Vows which I never meant to keep—
Ardent vows, yet lightly spoken,
As oft I spake to other maids ;
Just as lightly broken.

5

But Edith was of diff'rent kind
From all I ever met before,
And took my words in pure good faith
And loved me. Tho' I know
Not what her pure soul ever saw
And found in mine congenial.
The highest instincts of my soul
By hers were menial.
Although not of the perfect mould
Which poets love so well to praise,
Her gentle grace and dignity
Would fascinate the gaze.
Her face was softly proud and fair,
Bright with the smiles of happy youth,
And her eyes, when turned upon me,
Seemed shining stars of truth.

6

“Dear Love,” one day she softly said,
“What a happy life is ours!
With not a cloud upon our sky,
Nor thorn among our flowers.
For are our lives not almost one?
Our plighted hearts so closely bound,
That marriage vows could scarce place us
Upon holier ground.
And is this not rich happiness?
Ah! God alone can fully see
The perfect love which thrills my heart,
The trust I place in thee.”

7

Yet I, heartless, did forsake her;
The night before the marriage day.
Left her there to brave the cold world
And bear what it might say.
Left her thus, because I could not
Face to face my treachery show,
And all shams I knew would perish
Beneath her glance so pure.

8

In foreign lands I basely thought,
Mid strange scenes and pleasures new,
I'd soon forget the one I left.
My soul, but was this true?
Ah no! tho' fame and friends I've won,
And wealth, among strangers kind,
I cannot hush a still small voice,
I can no comfort find.
My spirit hovers o'er one spot
Where she, the true, the wronged, I know
Is sleeping in her lonely bed,
Her coverlet the snow.
No man accuses me, and yet
Within my heart and burning brain,
I feel and know that on my soul
Is stamped the curse of Cain!

9

Ah, here ye come again to taunt!
Remorse, Regret, and grim Despair!
And here to meet your ev'ry thrust
My guilty heart I bare!
For so 'tis meet. Yet would to God
These torturing pricks would cease,
And that one deep and deadly thrust
Could bring to my soul peace!

10

Oh, Edith, pray for me tonight!
In yonder peaceful, starry sphere.
Pray now, while kneeling on this rock
My soul echoes thy prayer,
That God may pardon even me;
And that the hell I here endure,
May be, when death shall call me hence,
No more for me in store!

II

Behold, heaven listens, Oh my soul!
For thro' the gloomy waste, afar
I see, with eager straining eyes,
The dawn of Hope's bright star!

AN OLD MAN'S REMINISCENCE.

Tonight there comes to mind
A tender little strain.

'Twould do my lone heart good
To hear that song again.

Long years have passed since last
I heard it sung to me,
When but a little child
Upon my mother's knee.

I can't recall the words,
Lost to memory quite;
Yet fancy sees the boy
And mother fair tonight.

She soothes him to sweet rest,
Singing this simple air.
The words, tho' lost, I know
Told of God's tender care.

FANCY AND FACT.

Sometimes Fancy would catch the rainbow,
And dash it zigzag thro' all spaces,
Scattering its brightness ev'rywhere,
Making light earth's gloomiest places.

Would waft the breezes in fresh coolness
Over every hot and fevered brow,
Gently lingering o'er tear-wet faces,
Sweetly soothing, as Fancy knows how.

So may love and joy, peace and mercy,
Patience, faith, hope, fill the rainbow part,
And borne on the breath of true kindness,
Lighten Earth's gloom, and soothe sorrow's heart.



CHARLEY BOY.

The chubby little Charley Boy,
With rosy cheeks, and solemn air,
Thro' all the years I see him yet
Giving our home good cheer.

Tho' tall grown now, almost a man,
To home he still gives cheer and joy.
And ever will his mother claim
Her same dear Charley Boy.

HOMEWARD.

I love to see men hasten home.
Where burns love's beck'ning light.
His day's work o'er, his office closed,
Man's place is home at night.

Such haply was I wont to see
In other days and times.
And ev'ry wife I would I could
Bless on this point, in these same ryhmes.

The club can never take the place
Of home and wife and children dear.
'Tis like an opiate, methinks,
Oft soothing with an unsafe cheer.

Home life is God's own remedy
For many ills which lead to pain.
Should man, upon God-given base,
Rear home, then make his own work vain?

Oh! gently stir the atmosphere
Around that sacred spot.
The "whys," and "wherefores" mingling there
Are mysteries we fathom not.

Yet in the home where haply still
Peace, confidence, and love abide,
Man's heart will gladly haste to find
These joys by his own fireside.

LORRAINE.

(From a story.)

In a lovely little village,
At the end of a narrow lane,
In a vine-clad hut kept by her hands,
Lived wilful, sweet Lorraine.

Tho' she was poor, yea very poor,
Her youthful heart was often light;
For tho' her mother long had died,
A father's love made life still bright.

Her years were few, but seventeen;
Yet she had made the neighbors learn
That when determined on a thing,
No earthly power her will could turn.

Thus wilful was the fair Lorraine;
Which deeply grieved her sire,
Who often tried, as often failed,
To check some rash desire.

She loved to venture boyish sports,
And brave the Fates on fiery steeds,
And people often lent her these
To see her do the daring deeds.

Yet she had gentle qualities,
And worked without complaining.
A lofty mind, in truth she had,
Tho' wild, for lack of training.

And now a circus troupe has come,
With it a youth with bright black eyes,
And soon, alas! a wilful heart
Gives up itself—a sacrifice.

Ah, foolish, wilful little heart!
Can nothing change your destiny?
Ah, poor Lorraine, could you but pierce
The future's awful mystery!

Could you but know the sequel grim,
To a treacherous, fatal day,
Which like a prison's portal dark
Now opens widely in your way.

By stealth they met in a chapel old,
Whose windows shed a ghastly light,
Which, falling on them, Lorraine thought
An ill omen, and clinging tight,

“Larry,” she said, “You look like death!
This is not like a wedding, dear—
Only the preacher, not one friend.
Oh, how I wish father were here!”

“Can’t back out now, my girl,” laughed he.
“I think I’m friend enough for you.
We could not have your father here;
He would not smile on what we do.”

“Yes, Larry, you are all to me.”

A trusting look she gave to him,
But quick the black eyes turned away;
E'en *he* felt such deceit was sin.

Oh! noble man, whoe'er you be,
If to your shelt'ring care is given
The trusting heart of woman true,
Protect it, as you hope for heaven!

“Good-bye, Lorraine, a little while.”

And off he hurried to the tent.
While, with a heart both glad and sad,
Back to her home slowly she went.

But what means all this gathered crowd,
Grouped thus about, and talking low?
They look at her, can they suspect?
To her faint heart she cried, “Oh no!”

Too soon the awful truth she hears,
Her father crushed beneath a yew!
Ah, poor Lorraine, thus soon you see,
Your ill omen is coming true!

“God is not cruel! He will spare!
My father, speak to me,” she said.
“Say you forgive my wilfulness!”
And placed her hand on his gray head.

“He is dead—dead!” she moaned aloud,
“And not one parting word to me!
Oh God, in mercy strike me too,
And set my wilful spirit free!”

Full soon the household goods were sold;
The little keepsakes women prize.
Yet she, but late wilful and free,
Rued not her deep’ning sacrifice.

“For my dear father,” so she thought,
“Would have joyed ere his spirit fled,
To know that some one loved me yet”—
Thus poor Lorraine was comforted.

But scarce a week of mourning past
Before new troubles darkly rise.
The knowing neighbors shook their heads
And whispered, “It is no surprise.”

“Lorraine, now you must ride your best,
Full tilt today around the ring.”
“I ride around the ring? Oh, no!
You would not have me do the thing!”

“Hark! I’ll tell you a secret, girl,
The hard truth now, simple and plain:
In your fine rides I saw pure gold,
Then I woo’d you, my proud Lorraine.”

A silence fell, a hushed reproach.

Yet pride seemed stifled in her breast—
She loved him yet, despite this stab.

“Larry,” she said, “I’ll do my best.”

Shadows ever darkening fell.

Indifference was sadly borne,
But when her Larry grew unkind,
The girl-wife’s face waxed thin and worn.

E’en when his baby’s new born cry
First reached his ear—that plaintive cry!
No quicker beat his heart—hard man!

Who nature’s call could thus defy.

“A lovely boy!” softly she spoke,
And held him up towards the light.
“Father, come see your baby boy,
His eyes, like yours, are black and bright.”

Careless he glanced down at their child.
No love light could she discover.
No welcome kiss gave he the babe,
And none to the yearning mother.

“I must love you for both,” she sobbed,
To her heart close folding the babe.
While sad tears fell, she turned her head,
From ill omens her child to save.

“God make his life more bright than mine,
Disclose no evil unforeseen,
For from my very birth 'twas said,
‘No good will come to poor Lorraine.’

And so it is that from that day
Much of ill has followed me,
And I would have my baby start
His pure life free from prophesy.”

Three weary, dreary months have passed,
And Lorraine, rocking to and fro,
Sings, “Go to sleep, my pretty one,
To rest, sweet rest, my baby, go.”

A harsh voice broke upon the calm:
“Today you ride Vixen de Lynne.
The steeple chase comes off at three.
A hundred pounds if you can win.”

“Ride Vixen!” she cried, with ashy lips.
“My husband!” and quick came her breath,
“If I ride Vixen in the chase,
I feel, I *know* it will be death!

You know he killed two men last week,
Would you tempt him to kill me too?
I care not much for my poor self,
But, little one, I can’t leave you!”

“Cease you such idle, silly talk,
And answer plainly, yes or no!
Ride Vixen—win the hundred pounds,
Or take your child today, and *go*.”

“Larry, but one short year ago
I could not have thought this of you.
But I can well believe it now;
Your cruelty pierces me thro’!”

But *somewhere* there is love, and peace!
I will ride Vixen, tho’ I die!
And when I’m lying stiff and cold,
No one, save my baby, will cry.”

Thus may marriage change a woman,
Make her once happy life a curse;
Crush to earth her lofty spirit,
Give her bitterness to nurse!

Restless, impatient, pawing the earth,
Black Vixen stood with flashing eye.
“Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!” they cry,
As horse and rider seemed to fly!

Leaping high fences without pause,
Scarce touching earth the horse’s feet,
Sudden he stopped! Plunged! Reared straight
up!
Passing, another rider beat.

“Curse the bad luck!” muttered Larry,
“She said ‘twas death, and death I see!”
And long he gazed on that pale face
Lying beside the fatal tree.

Charity brought the death-robe plain,
Late Pity heaved a sigh, may be.
Thus died the poor, ill-starred Lorraine,
And no one wept, but her baby.



OH! HEART OF MINE.

Oh! heart of mine, sobbing thy grief,
Will these hot tears bring thee relief?
Feeling the throbbing of thy pain,
Knowing thy sorrowing is vain,
That lights gone out cannot still burn,
Tho’ all our thoughts to longings turn,
I pity thee!

Oh! heart of mine, take up thy cross,
Nor brood forever on thy loss.
Yet, since the sunshine finds thee not
And all thy glad notes are forgot,
While trembling sobs cease not at will,
And thy sad wail arises still,
I pity thee!

AUNT JULIE.

A sweet, gentle face, long hidden from sight,
In memory's light still looks thro' the years,
And as perfume lingers, tho' flowers are dead,
Her influence lives, and blesses, and cheers.

One of God's chosen, who suffering bore,
Yet quietly went about doing good,
Smoothing the pathway for others to tread ;
In sorrow's storm-time a pillar she stood.

Bereft of mother, another warm breast
Pillooned her infancy, cherished her youth.
Like bread cast on waters, in turn she proved
To that island home* a blessing in truth.

That warm island home ! Forever aglow
With kindness, sacred love-ties and blest.
Memory cherishes that which hath been,
Tho' all the birds flee from the lonely nest.

*The Hinson home—James Island.



FIRE-WORKS.

Beautiful lights of blue, gold, and red !
Myriad stars falling everywhere !
Beautiful golden arches o'erhead—
Christmas is here, and joy in the air !

ANNIVERSARY LINES.

On the first anniversary of the death of Mrs. Hannah Patterson, a highly esteemed lady of Barnwell, and grandmother of the writer.

1890.

“Mother”—name beloved and cherished!

“Grandmother”—name to us so sweet!

“Great-grandmother,” let us harken,
Three generations’ voices meet.

With one accord they honor her,
Tell with grateful hearts the story
Of her useful life on earth,
Of that life complete in glory.

’Twas just one year ago today,
The dear eyes closed, the sweet face paled,
The soft hand gave no answering clasp,
And we knew Earth’s life had failed.

But the dear one had grown weary
Of the burden borne so long;
Tired of human life and pain,
Longing to join the ransomed throng.

So tho’ our hearts were torn and bleeding,
Yet we would not wish her here.
Midst that glory bright, eternal,
What has earth to offer her?

Fourscore years and four she tarried.

Dear one, how we clung to thee!

Yea, tenderly we loved thee here,

And now we love thy memory.

Softly may thy influence holy

Round our hearts its tendrils twine,
And when death shall summon us,

May our end be blest as thine.



A LITTLE FLOWER.

Frail and pure, and beautiful!

Soft waving flaxen hair.

Dear baby face, and winning ways,

Oh, she was sweet and fair!

Sweet flow'ret gone from Earth,

In Paradise to bloom,

In the garden of our God,

Thine the joy, ours the gloom!

HEAVEN'S ECSTASIES.

Earth is not all entrancing to me;
Its brief raptures enslave me not.
Rather, as the years roll by I see
On its ev'ry beauty a blot.

The purest joy which earth can give,
Yet sooner or later, dies;
And it cannot claim what may relive,
Beyond the ethereal skies.

For there heaven surely claims its own,
Freed from ev'ry taint of Earth;
Merging in unspoken splendor,
These same joys have new birth.

And I want to go; I'm tired
Of this first life to us given.
I long to feel my being quiver
With the ecstacies of heaven!

To bathe my soul, and slake its thirst
And drown its every moan,
In the flood of glory which flows forth
From God's effulgent throne.

To find lost chords of life's mystic harp—
Dear heart chords, lost mid deep sighs;
Severed by death, but found and retouched
Where love's melody never dies.

The very air of heaven, methinks
Breathes entrancing melodies,
While God's dear saints each wear a crown
Reflecting the brightness of his.

But it is not the brightness I crave.

Oh, no! 'tis the healing balm.
Heaven's balm for every wound of earth,
For ev'ry storm, heaven's calm.

Thus heaven, faith pictures thy glory,
Tho' in half of its fullness not,
Yet 'tis as a staff to the pilgrim,
In the dark like a shining spot.



UPWARD GLANCES.

When clear eyes are raised from Earth,
Viewing the heavens above,
Hearts often turn unto their God,
Drawn by His magnet, love.

THE FIRST-BORN.

He came, but went away so soon
I scarce could realize
That he was mine, my very own,
Flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone,
My babe with dark blue eyes.

Snapped were the little cords of life,
And over the silv'ry wave
He was borne to the other shore,
Leaving fond hearts to sorrow o'er
A tiny new-made grave.

But tho' our earthly hopes for him
By death are blighted now,
Mid shining throngs, by faith, we see
The sweetest wreath of purity
Upon his little brow.

Sweet child, thy little hands so white
Beckon us to heaven,
Thy father and thy mother, we;
Ah, twofold blessed work to thee,
Little one, is given!

Surpassing all earth's brightest hopes
Is thy condition now.
Naught, happy babe, shall break thy rest,
Nor sigh upheave thy little breast,
Nor wrinkle mar thy brow!

Forever and forever more,
Thy little life shall shine,
A small but purest little gem
Within God's holy diadem,
Thou sainted babe of mine!



A QUESTION.

Irresistably hurried onward
 Into the endless future,
With projects ever unfinished,
 And sins which ever pollute you,
How will you meet the issue great,
 The final, tremendous shock?
Standing alone and unsheltered,
 Or in the cleft of the Rock?

AS A LITTLE CHILD.

Father, help me, Thy mortal child,
To feel aright, to see aright,
And fully trust Thee all the while,
Tho' veiled Thou be from human sight.

Guide me firmly, guard me closely,
Lest, bewildered, I should stray,
While the shadows flitter o'er me
And so tangled seems the way.

Keep me as still a little child,
Who feels no doubt, who knows no fear,
And when aweary nestles close,
And sweetly slumbers, after prayer.

Let Thy grace in full, rich measure
Flood with light and peace my soul,
While I write life's changeful letter,
Though long, or short the scroll.

Let me see Thee as Thou art kind,
And when I grope, and cannot see,
Because my mortal eyes are dim,
Let Faith my saving pilot be.

OUR MOTHER.

Looking backward thro' the years,
We see her thoughtful, true, and kind.
We hear her words of love, and feel
The strength and beauty of her mind.
Such thoughts are good to dwell upon,
And help us comfort one another;
For truly many virtues met
In the nature of our mother.

With firm, prompt steps she trod the way
Which duty's light clearly defined,
And bore the burdens duty lay
Full bravely, nor often repined.
E'en when the weight, perchance, pressed hard
On her dear heart and tender arm,
She placed her trust firm in her God,
And persevered, resolved and calm.

No wonder that her childrens' hearts
In deepest love around her twined.
No wonder that the grandchildren
Her love and kindness have enshrined.
None can forget how well she loved;
And love than death is stronger far;
The shadowy valley past, God's saints,
In His own light, more loving are.

The gentle ministries of home,
The cheerful fireside love and peace,
The guiding and the comforting,
In memory shall never cease.
The loving heart to heart response,
No pen can tell—the fount too deep—
The mother love—the aching void—
Silence the sacred trust must keep.

No monument of stone can last
Like a mother's influence blest.
No graven slab can tell the past,
Nor all the virtues she possessed.
But written on her children's hearts,
Indelibly and beautiful,
Her record, which to them imparts
New strength for all things dutiful.

We saw her life—we saw her death—
Here let the curtain softly fall.
But tho' hushed be the gentle breath,
And still the heart, this is not all!
Faith looks beyond, and soaring high,
Sees our loved ones greet each other,
While thro' our tears we grateful cry:
“Thank God for such a Mother!”

EPITAPH.

Our mother sleeps, her journey o'er;
Still clearly shines her light.
Our hearts below, and heaven above
Cherish her record bright.
Our mother lives. Heaven's mystic air
Inspires each saintly breath.
Oh, healing balm! Oh, Love divine,
Which conquers even death!



MISS HENRIETTA AND HER LITTLE FRIEND.

A little child, and feeble age,
Far apart, yet drawn together
By sympathy and kindly thought,
Each for the other.

Little gifts, some flowers, a book,
Kind words of counsel, love, and praise,
Helping, soothing, cheering, blessing
Two hearts in two ways.

Listen to the child-voice reading
Words from the holy book of God,
To her, the good and faithful one
'Neath God's smile or rod.

Behold one picture more, the last,
As in parting prayer they bend—
We thus leave Miss Henrietta
And her little friend.

SAVING WORK.

"It is so late!" cried mistress D—
"And breakfast to be served for three.
I hurry must at fastest rate
To get Ben off to school by eight."

With splinters fat called to her aid,
A roaring fire soon she made.
To toast the bread and coffee boil
Five minutes took and little toil.

"Come to your breakfast, Ben!" she cried,
"You're cold, so sit the stove beside."
And gave him his hot toast and drink
Almost before the cat could wink.

Soon Ben was off, and left his plate
And cup exactly where he ate.
The mother then took the same seat
And from his cup and plate did eat.

"This saves me work, and 'tis so warm,
And no one sees, so 'tis no harm.
When servants fail to come, you see
It's good to make a shift like me.

Here comes my little girl at last.
Why darling, it is eight half past!"
With relish keen the child then ate
And drank from the same cup and plate.

“This does save work,” thought Mistress D—
“One plate and cup to serve for three.”
But all that day she badly felt
As tho’ a word she’d wrongly spelt.



LITTLE MISS PRECOCITY.

When I am a woman grown,
I don’t mean to be a prude,
I think it’s nicer far to flirt
With some handsome dandy dude.

Oh, I’ll have a jolly time,
And enjoy the best of life!
Till some day I may find myself
Somebody’s dear little wife.



LITTLE BOY’S SPEECH.

(Wearing his first pants.)

I’m a man—ev’ry inch—
I feel it all thro’,
From the top of my head
To the sole of my shoe.

You think I look little?
I don’t care a fig,
For I’m wearing pants
And I feel mighty big!

BERTHA.

Only a rustic maid was she,
But oh, so wondrous fair!
With velvet cheeks and deep blue eyes,
And wealth of shining hair.

Like some fair flower she seemed to grow,
Beneath her father's care.
An old man he, with brow serene,
And crowned with snowy hair.

But how she loved that withered form!
And how he loved his child!
Pure angels must have gazed upon
That sacred love, and smiled.

“Bertha,” one day the old man said,
“Child of my sainted wife,
A danger real and treacherous
Lurks round thy fresh young life.”

“Dear father, what is it?” she asked.
The old man sadly smiled.
“Truly, tho’ you think it least,
It is thy beauty, child.

And Bertha, mark now what I say,
Should ever man's eyes gaze
In rudeness on thy virgin face,
And utter cunning praise,

Tho' he be some rich duke or earl,
Unheeding, turn away,
And scorn the glance which would deceive,
The words which would betray.

But should there come some honest youth,
With truth upon his brow,
And with a pure and noble heart
His love for you should vow,

Tho' he be but a peasant's son,
Instead of lordship high,
Oh, Bertha, think before you scorn,
And pause before you fly!

Nay, answer not, my little one,
I know what you would say.
Remember but my warning words,
Turn from deceit away.

There's Malcolm Moore, a braver lad
Breathes not the breath of life.
And Bertha, do you know, I think
He wants you for his wife?"

No wonder that a maid so fair
Should draw the gaze of all,
And tho' perchance in guilelessness,
Should many hearts enthrall.

Among the rest, Lord Ulmer bowed,
And swore that he'd be true;
And Bertha blushed and proudly smiled,
And so, perchance, would you.

“I'll make of you a lady great,
Sweet rustic maid,” he said;
“Your loveliness shall grace the Court,
When you to me are wed.”

“And my dear father,” proud she said,
“Shall go along with me,
And help to grace the brilliant Court,
“And we'll so happy be.”

“Hush, Bertha dear,” he sternly said,
“I spoke for you alone,
And not that plebian old man,
With garments threadbare worn.

No, when you quit his roof, that day
I'll let him plainly know
He's not expected at the Court—
You should have known before.”

“Sir,” she cried, with flashing eyes,
And scorn in every tone,
“If my dear Sire is not to go,
Then you may go alone.

I loathe you for those heartless words!

You fear what men may say;
Your servile love wakes no response
In my heart from this day.

You scorn the root, yet love the branch!

Or so at least you say.
Such logic is too deep for me;
My mind runs not that way.

E'en did I turn my faithless steps
From my dear Sire away,
The pride which hates his peasant blood,
His daughter would betray.

Nay! vow no more! I trust you not.

That love cannot be strong
Which struggles in the grasp of pride,
Nor can such love live long.

And soon perchance ashamed you'd grow
Of her you'd call your wife.
Then over thorns my wounded feet
Would have to walk thro' life.

But 'tis not this, in truth 'tis not,
Which deepest moves my heart.
No thought of self, for weal or woe,
Makes these quick tear-drops start.

But oh, how sad had been his lot,
Whose eye e'en now is dim,
Beside his lonely hearth to pine
Until death beckoned him!

Oh, father, kind and tenderest!
Until God's hand shall sever,
Together we will closely cling,
For leave you I will never!

And Malcolm Moore, my early love,
Most constant, tried and true,
Before this frowning Lord, I swear,
To marry only you!

I thought I loved him, now I blush,
And my vain folly see.

A straw can prove the wind's true course,
A word has wakened me.

I'd rather have you deck my brow
With flowers wild and fair,
Than take from such a hand as his
A crown of jewels rare.

And I have loved you, Malcolm Moore,
With deep and earnest truth,
And always meant your wife to be,
Even from early youth.

Until this Lord, with gewgaws bright,
Allured my too vain heart,
And taught my fancy to believe
I loved him too, in part.

But as I part the rose leaves fair,
A worm lies revealed!
I pierce the false bright veil, and lo!
There's treachery concealed!

I tremble now to think I scorned
A pearl so rich and pure,
And dreamed another might replace
The love of Malcom Moore!

Then go, Lord Ulmer! Fare thee well!
Our paths henceforth divide,
With honored sire and lover brave
I happy will abide."

"So be it, Bertha!" fierce the light
Within Lord Ulmer's eyes,
"For Lord to wed a peasant maid
Perchance had not been wise.

But do not think I will forget,
For deep into my brain
The memory of this day has sunk,
And I will come again."

* * *

Three years of wedded happiness,
And two years old their boy,
His father's and his mother's pride,
His grandpapa's best joy.

Wee dimples playing hide and seek
On his sweet baby face,
From cheek to chin, and chin to cheek,
In such a merry race!

“Sing me to sleep, dear grandpapa.”
The child would often say,
And on the old man’s loving breast
His curly head would lay.

’Tis something pitiful to me
To hear the aged sing;
The voice so weak and tremulous
Seems such a fleeting thing.

And tears would come to Bertha’s eyes,
Those feeble tones to hear;
The lullaby, tho’ half forgot,
The same he’d sung to her.

“Bless thy sweet heart, dear grand-baby,”
One night the old man said,
“Without thee I believe in truth
I’d soon lie ’mong the dead.

Bless thy sweet prattle, little one,
And let me never hear
A word which is not good and pure
Come from your lips so dear.”

Work in this true, loving home,
But made the rest more sweet,
As round the cheerful evening fire
So happily they meet.

* * *

But what is this, this mighty grief,
Which falls with deadly power?
What mean these cries which pierce the air,
In the dim twilight hour?

“The boy is lost!” Now all around
That wild cry doth resound;
But tho’ they search by night and day,
The child cannot be found.

Brave Malcolm leads an eager band
Of men as brave as he,
Thro’ woods, o’er streams, to distant parts,
But no trace can they see.

Poor Bertha mourns in agony;
Hot tears her pale cheeks burn,
And prays that God in mercy great
Their darling may return.

The old man never weeps, but goes,
With footsteps growing slower,
“To look for baby,” and returns,
With white head bending lower.

A few months pass, and Bertha bows
Beneath a twofold cross.
Beside her father's grave she sits
And mourns her twofold loss.

He died in peace, tho' at the last
The pale lips murmured low,
"Oh, baby, come to grandpapa,
And kiss me ere I go!"

Thus do old age and infancy
So close together twine;
For the tiny fruit, pure and sweet,
Still yearns the dying vine.

* * *

One dark and stormy afternoon
Towards the close of May,
Said Bertha, with an aching heart,
"This is our wedding day."

When griefs all fresh with bitterness
Upon our young hearts lay,
How sad and lonely to recall
The happy marriage day!

So thought poor Bertha, as she stood
And watched the gathering storm,
While Malcolm's strong protecting arm
Encircled her frail form.

Peal after peal of thunder grand
Awoke the echoes round,
While lightning lit the dark'ning sky,
And wild winds swept the ground.

Sudden a horseman rode in sight,
His hat low on his head,
His mantle loose around him flung,
As rapidly he sped.

Why did Bertha's cheek grow pale
As nearer yet he drew?
Why did she give a startled cry
As back his plaid he threw?

Within his arms he bore a child,
And whispered in his ear;
The baby lips caught up the words,
Which pierced the heart to hear.

"Curse you both!" the child cried loud,
As past the door they flew,
While cruel winds brought back the cry,
"I curse the old man too."

Was it for this the heavens wept,
As sudden rain whirled round?
As tho' to cleanse the guilty air,
And wash the wounded ground!

And they are gone! Far thro' the gloom
The parents strain their eyes.
Joy and grief, with hope and fear,
In quick succession rise.

Not long did Malcolm stand amazed,
But grasping his true sword,
One hasty kiss on Bertha's brow,
Then boldly out he strode.

What cared he tho' torrents poured?
Alone he struggled on.
Tho' black the night, the hope it held,
Tomorrow might be gone.

At midnight hour at last he stood
Before a lonely door,
The only house for many miles,
As he had known before.

No man in such a storm as this
Would pass a shelter by,
He truly judged, and with firm hand
He raised his sword on high.

Then with a sudden bound he burst
Against the outer door,
Which groaning on the rusty hinge,
Fell prostrate on the floor.

No voice was heard, but through a crack
 He saw a light's dim ray,
Then softly entered and, behold!
 His child before him lay.

He slept in childish innocence,
 In happy, peaceful rest,
The baby hands together clasped
 Upon the little breast.

Not so, Lord Ulmer! guilty ears
 Are quick to catch a sound!
With hasty spring he grasped his sword,
 Which lay upon the ground.

One moment's clash, and Malcolm stood
 Triumphant o'er his foe,
Lord Ulmer prostrate on the spot,
 Felled by a sudden blow.

I know not what had been his fate
 Had not the child awoke,
For accidents as slight as this
 May great results evoke.

The little voice was quickly raised
 In plaintive baby cries,
And Malcolm fancied mem'ry's light
 Shone in those infant eyes.

Stern vengeance bowed its lofty head
Before the little child,
Who clinging to the father's breast,
Raised its sweet face, and smiled.

When Malcolm turned his softened face
To gaze upon his foe,
The place was empty, and he saw
Lord Ulmer's form no more.

No disappointment marred the tone
In which he nobly said,
"So be it," as he threw himself
Upon his foe's late bed.

No need to tell of Bertha's joy,
Her happiness profound!
To try to give a voice to this
Like mockery would sound.

And yet how oft her thoughts would turn,
With new regret and pain,
To a green grave in the churchyard, since
The boy had come again.

She tried to make him understand
How wrong his curse had been,
But found the pure and tender heart
Could nothing learn of sin.

But soon the childish lips and heart
Did learn in truth to say,
"Rest in God's peace, dear grandpapa;
God bless us all I pray."



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